The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accurate and reliable information of matters affecting labor generally in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains valuable information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1753 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 46

War, Peace, Chief Issues As AFL Convention Opens

Delegates Show Confidence In Nation's Future In Early Debates

New Orleans.—The 64th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor is about to put under way with the problems of winning the war and the peace uppermost in the minds of the 600 delegates.

These delegates, representing 101 national and international unions and more than 50,000 local unions, including State Federations and city central bodies, have come here to chart future policies for the record-breaking 4,850,218 membership of the American Federation of Labor.

Their spirit as they gathered in the spacious New Orleans Municipal Auditorium was high and their confidence unshaken in the principles of early victory and the establishment of lasting world peace.

In token of their desire to do everything possible to speed the victory, the delegates were prepared to give a rousing endorsement to labor's no-strike pledge for the duration of the war.

At the same time, the delegates appeared to be in an aggressive mood with regard to restrictive government policies which have hampered labor's efforts to mobilize the war production program to the highest pitch, and to prepare the nation for an era of post-war prosperity.

Chief among the complaints voiced by the delegates in the pre-convention discussions around the hotel lobbies were the blind stand against the Little Steel Formula. Most of the union representatives expressed the belief that this wage-freeze formula should be scrapped entirely and all agreed that the least the government should do is to revise the formula so that wage rates can be brought into parity with increased living costs.

Unless such action is taken, the delegates said, the purchasing power of the nation's workers is bound to suffer severely in the post-war period that full production and jobs for all will be impossible of attainment.

However, the predominant note among the delegates was optimistic. They appeared to be cheered by the progress of the United Nations' military forces in Europe and in the Pacific and they seemed confident that Germany's resistance will break and the war in Europe will be over long before most observers anticipate.

The likelihood that the war against Japan will continue for many months after victory in Europe was regarded as an opportunity to speed up reconversion in many industries and get the way set for an all-out peace production program by the time final victory on all fronts is assured.

For the most part the delegates appeared inspired by the cheering results and the conviction was expressed in many quarters that the President could not have been elected to a fourth term without overwhelming labor support.

The debates anticipated a renewed drive for much broader social security legislation in the new Congress, particularly an advanced unemployment compensations system strong enough to tide over those displaced in war industries until peacetime jobs are available.

Among the matters in which the union representatives showed special interest were the reports brought back from the fighting fronts by Paul R. Porter, director of Organization Frank Fenton and the reports on conditions in Europe contributed by the AFL's fraternal delegates to the British Trades Union Congress and by Joseph Ornini, who made a special trip to Italy as AFL President William Green's personal representative.

Frey Hits Federal Agency Muddles

New Orleans.—Demands for consolidation and simplification of the Government's agencies and regulations dealing with labor were sounded by President John P. Frey as the 80th annual convention of the AFL Metal Trades Department got under way here.

"During the year," Mr. Frey told the delegates from the metal trades unions, "there has been a growing feeling of dissatisfaction over the delay, the long drawn out delay in many instances, in securing prompt and decisions from these Federal agencies to whom labor was forced to appeal.

"There was also the thought that this advantage was being taken or labor's no-strike pledge, that secured additorium was high and their confidence unshaken in the principles of early victory and the establishment of lasting world peace.

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GOV'T LABOR OFFICIALS REPORTED RESIGNING

Washington, D. C.—Hard upon President Roosevelt's reelection came automatic reports of resignations and replacements in many key labor posts.

William H. Davis, chairman of the National War Labor Board, confirmed reports that he had submitted his resignation to the White House in order to return to his private law practice in New York.

At the same time, Vice Chairman George W. Taylor, who formerly headed a group of economists at the University of Pennsylvania, also revealed that he had submitted his resignation so that he could return to teaching.

A third public member of the NWLB, Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, confirmed reports that he, too, had offered his resignation.

The White House indicated that, for the time being at least, the President would not fill the vacancies created by the departure of these three members.

Meanwhile, for the "unofficial" word, rumors were reviewed that Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins would quit or would be replaced. One Washington newspaper started a campaign for the appointment of Isador Lubin to succeed her. Mr. Lubin recently resigned as New York State department of Conciliation Service.

Retail Clerks Union Takes Action To Admit Servicemen Without Fee

Lafayette, Ind.—The Executive Board of the Retail Clerks International Protective Association unanimously adopted a resolution providing for the admission into the union of honorably discharged servicemen without payment of any initiation fee.

The resolution adopted by the board said:

"Whereas, it is a declared principle of the Retail Clerks International Protective Association to foster confidence in each other as workers for the purpose of maintaining acceptable conditions and terms of employment; and

"Whereas, it is recognized that a large number of veterans will, at the close of World War Two, be seeking replacement in the industrial life of our Nation; and

"Whereas, the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated organizations desire to assist the men and women who have been honorably discharged from the service of the Government to resume their peace time occupations; therefore

"Be it resolved, that in recognition of the loyal and patriotic service given, the General Executive Board of the Retail Clerks International Protective Association shall authorize and instruct its affiliated local unions to investigate those cases coming under their observation as may be affected by this ruling unanimously adopted; and

"Any applicant who has served in the military or armed forces of the United States or Canada during World War Two, and who has received honorable discharge from such service, shall if eligible, be accepted to membership upon filing application within sixty days from date of honorable discharge without payment of current dues, fees and assessments but such membership shall be subject to the same classifications and entitled to the same rights and privileges as are accorded to other members as set forth in the International Constitution adopted at the Nineteenth International convention held in 1939."

AFL Unions Seek Bargaining Rights At Huge Government Power Projects

Seattle.—The Bonneville Administration has agreed to sit down and negotiate with AFL union representatives, thus paving the way for the establishment of real collective bargaining on the huge northwest power project which takes in both the Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams along the Columbia River.

The administration is a division of the Department of Interior, under the department of Ickes, but its labor relations are governed by civil service regulations.

For a long time, the Columbia Power Trades Council, representing nearly 30 AFL unions working on the projects, has been trying to secure collective bargaining with the Bonneville officials. Heretofore, there have been only informal dealings and consultations between the officials and the unions, with the result that they cannot enter into collective bargaining agreements because of civil service rules.

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The situation is entirely different from that of the Grand Coulee Authority, which is set up as an autonomous government corporation and which, for establishing highly successful collective bargaining agreements with AFL unions.

Now, at Bonneville a step in that direction has also been achieved. The officials have finally decided that the law permits them to undertake real collective bargaining with the unions although they still insist that whatever agreement is reached will have to be oral and cannot be put down in writing.

Nonetheless, Oscar G. Haxbal, international representative of the Electrical Workers hailed this concession "as a long step forward, because now there is hope that some of the obstacles could be cleared away," Hedges said. "All the building trades unions in the area feel that on projects similar to Bonneville, where an oral agreement between federal and union organizations has been amicably reached, such agreement can be put down in writing.

"We believe such revised regulations would be helpful all 'round—helpful to labor, in the public and to the government. More harmonious relations and greater efficiency would be the result."

GREEN'S KEYNOTE SPEECH TO BE BROADCAST NOV. 20

New Orleans.—AFL President William Green's keynote speech to the 64th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor will be broadcast to the nation over the facilities of the Columbia Broadcasting System Nov. 20.

In order to reach the widest possible audience, Mr. Green will go on the air from Station WWL here at 10:15 p.m., CWT., with a condensed version of the address delivered to the delegates in the opening morning session.

All members of the American Federation of Labor and their friends are urged to tune in to this speech which will review labor's past accomplishments and chart labor policies for the coming year.

AFL WILL INITIATE WAR BOND DRIVE

New Orleans.—America's 4th War Bond Drive for the sale of 14 billion dollars worth of the best investment securities in the world will be launched at a mass meeting of delegates to the 64th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor on Nov. 20.

To this gathering, in the grand ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau will speak by radio over the facilities of the Mutual Network.

From the rostrum, AFL President William Green will reply with a rousing appeal to American labor to help put the new War Bond Drive over the top.

Also on the same radio program, which will be carried over a coast-to-coast network, will be Henry Kaiser, West Coast industrialist who has earned the respect and admiration of all labor as well as the nation. Mr. Kaiser will speak from Portland, Ore.

This is one of the big radio features of the convention.

On Nov. 16, Mr. Green will speak over the NBC network in behalf of labor's plans for combatting the effects of the anti-labor legislative events adopted in the last election by the States of Florida and Arkansas.

On Nov. 20 Mr. Green will broadcast a condensed version of his keynote address to the convention. This will be carried by the Columbia Broadcasting System 10:15 to 10:30 p.m., Central War Time.

Beginning Nov. 27, Richard Harkness, top-flight NBC commentator, will give a nightly description of AFL convention highlights until the meeting is closed. He is heard over all NBC stations from 10:15 to 10:30 p.m., Central War Time.

BUILDING SERVICE WORKERS AWARDED PAY INCREASE

New York City.—Wage increases of $1.25 a week for 24,000 members of Local 32-B of the Building Service Employes International Union, AFL, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, have been approved by the National War Labor Board, William L. Norton, chairman of the board, announced. The action followed a series of joint voluntary wage applications of the union and the Midtown Realty Owners' Association, the Uptown Realty Board on Labor Relations, Inc., and several hundred individual employers in Manhattan buildings.

MACHINISTS GAIN HOLD IN AIR TRANSPORT FIELD

Washington, D. C.— Already dominant in the aircraft production industry, the International Association of Machinists reported smashing gains in the field of air transportation as well.

Victories were scored by the I. A. M. in elections conducted by the National Mediation Board of the status of two big airways—the Continental Airlines, which spans the West and the Northeast Airlines, which covers New England.

In the Continental election, held among more than 2,000 workers at the company's repair shops and airplane modification plant in Denver, the Machinists' administered a decisive victory to the "independent" Airline Mechanics' Association, winning over 60 per cent of the votes cast. In the Northeast Airlines election, the I. A. M. won by 863 per cent. The balloting was conducted under provisions of the Railway Labor Act.

I. B. E. W. SET TO OPEN ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

Milwaukee.—One of the nation's most significant labor educational projects in the electronics field was sponsored by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, will get under way next week at Marquette University with an initial class of 75 students, it was announced by local officials.

The school has stirred unusual interest all over the country, President E. J. Brown of the Brotherhood revealed. Scores of newspapers and magazines have commented favorably on the undertaking, and other colleges, including Canadian universities, courses in electronics, have offered to take on some of the school's "graduates" as full-time teachers.

Wage Revision Now Vital, Meany Declares On Radio

Warns of Post-War Crash Unless Immediate Action Is Taken

Washington, D. C. Unless the Government breaks the "wage-freeze now," "the military victory for which America has so courageously fought will be followed by an extended period of deflation and depression," AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany warned the nation in a radio broadcast.

At present wage levels, Mr. Meany insisted, American workers will not be able to buy enough or consume enough to "sustain full production and thereby provide full employment."

He added:

"Let those who have been talking in terms of full employment after the war, when production reaches a national income of 140 billion dollars and 60,000,000 civilian jobs look this problem squarely in the eye. There will be no full employment, no high national income, no 60,000,000 jobs unless it is on the basis of a high-wage economy. Our American system cannot provide full employment on any other basis.

"Labor's position on this question cannot be charged to its traditional desire to get for itself a fairer share of the wealth it produces. The problem has transcended even this age-old objective of labor. Our approach to the problem of full employment is an approach that could well be followed by all Americans who desire victory on the home front as well as on the military front. Labor believes that unless we have a high-wage economy after the war, the sacrifices that we have made in order to achieve victory will bring us a new era of depression, disillusionment and economic chaos.

"The 11,000,000 young men in our armed forces expect—as they have every right to expect—an economy that will provide them with decent jobs after the war. They are not going to be satisfied with empty promises of tall talk of full employment. They want action. And the time for action on this question is now, before the war ends.

"If we wait until V-E Day, with its wholesale contract cancellations and resultant mass unemployment, it will be too late. The die will be cast.

"Millions of men in service and our nation has been wise, during the war, to fight against it. But let us not forget that deflation and depression are likewise catastrophes. And deflation and depression is what we are headed for immediately following the end of this war unless the wage-freeze policy of the War Labor Board is modified to provide the vital purchasing power we must have for full production and full employment.

"The time for action on this vital wage problem is now. The Little Steel formula must be modified—now. The time to provide for the adequate purchasing power we must have for full post-war employment is now.

"The American Federation of Labor has been fighting for action on this vital problem for many months. We shall continue to fight for it and to serve the interests of the nation as a whole.

"Increased purchasing power in the hands of the consumer is a good thing for the manufacturer, the storekeeper and the banker, just as it is a good thing for the working man. If the manufacturer, the storekeeper and the banker want postwar prosperity instead of WPA and bread lines then they must do more than wish and hope. They can and should join with labor in the fight for a high-wage economy in the postwar days without which we cannot—realize our greatest hopes for full production and full employment."

AFL PAPERMAKER DECORATED BY ARMY

Washington, D. C.—The high regard in which the Army holds half-track vehicles, and other products of union members is indicated by the award of a Bronze Star Medal to Corporal Joseph H. Anslow, member of the Brotherhood of Paper Makers, Local No. 17, for his part in saving valuable American equipment from destruction by fire in Italy.

Corporal Anslow's citation tells that on May 27, 1944, near Anzio, Italy, an enemy shell struck a half-track vehicle and set fire to it. In spite of the heavy barrage of enemy shells, Anslow and two fellow soldiers rushed to the blazing vehicle to extinguish the fire. As they reached the burning half-track, another shell landed nearby, setting fire to a small ammunition dump. The three men, endangered by burning and exploding ammunition, ran to the area of the ammunition dump and retrieved a burning trailer and an undamaged half-track, saving both of them from total destruction. They then went to another half-track and put out flames which would have destroyed it.

AFL GROUP GAINS $50,000 RENT CUTS

San Diego, Calif.—Action by the AFL-OPA committee of the Central Labor Council has saved tenants in this area more than $50,000 rent monthly in rents.

There have been 2,839 reductions in rent from Aug. 1 to Oct. 17, according to Acting Rent Director James B. Moore. The reductions averaged $25 monthly during August and $22.21 during September, resulting in a monthly saving of more than $50,000. Credit goes to the AFL-OPA committee, which has been conducting an intensive campaign for rental rollbacks here for the past war years.

Union Shop Ban Defeated In Calif.; AFL Challenges Laws In Fla. and Ark.

Washington, D. C.—Joseph A. Padway, AFL general counsel, hailed the election victory over the proposed State constitutional amendment to ban the union shop in California as a triumph for the American Federation of Labor and the state federation which conducted a vigorous campaign to defeat the proposal.

Mr. Padway gave credit to enlightened business men and veterans groups in California for helping to defeat the amendment because they felt it would disrupt labor relations and interfere with the war production program.

Late returns showed that a similar amendment to ban the union shop was running ahead in Florida and also in Arkansas.

Mr. Padway declared that if the authorities in these states attempt to enforce the anti-labor features of the union shop agreements, the American Federation of Labor will move swiftly to challenge the constitutionality of the amendments.

In an opinion rendered to the AFL Executive Council, Mr. Padway declared such amendments clearly unconstitutional in that they violate the freedom of contract guaranteed by the federal constitution.

He also pointed out that these amendments conflict with federal legislation and with war measures, such as the provisions of the National War Labor Board.

When such conflicts arise, Mr. Padway said, the federal law is controlling. This principle was upheld by the Florida state supreme court in a decision refusing to allow an injunction against union shop agreements entered into by Florida shipyards and AFL unions.

In order to test the validity of the Florida amendment, Mr. Padway said, and if it is necessary to outlaw the amendments.

Should the National War Labor Board indicated it would ignore the Florida and Arkansas amendments and will settle disputes involving union security in Florida and Arkansas on the same basis as it does in all other states. Even if employers try to use the new laws as an excuse for denying maintenance of membership in the two states, the board will refuse to heed such pleas.

Scrap The Little Steel Formula!

The following article is taken from a statement presented by Mr. Shishkin over the Town Hall Meeting of the Air.

By BORIS SHISHKIN,
Economist For The American Federation of Labor

There are four reasons why the Little Steel formula should be stricken from the book of wage-freeze laws.

First, because the Little Steel formula is too little. Its measurements bear no relation to the expansion of production and worker productivity. Any sound formula for wage stabilization must take into account the worker's effort, his output and his skill to the worker's pay. All along the line our wartime wage structure has suffered from what may be called "skill deflation." Because of production line methods, which have become large, they have hurt production, deterred war output, and have served to slacken our pace toward victory.

Right now it is of crucial importance to increase war production, including strategic items in ordnance, heavy-duty trucks, heavy tires and other fighting equipment. What is holding back this critically needed expansion? The postwar foundries are a bottleneck. They say there is a manpower shortage in foundries. The reason foundry labor is hard to get and to keep is that foundry wages are far too low. It is not a manpower problem, it is a wage problem.

As Gen. Clay has said, "the work in foundries and casting and forging shops is a hard, dirty, back-breaking, physical exertion." The foundry worker's pay does not measure up to the heat, the grime and the physical strain he has to put in his job. The foundry worker keeps the pace of production up to the limit, when the government spends all kinds of money to get Mexicans and Bahamans to fill these jobs. Is that fair to the Mexicans and Bahamans? Is that fair to our workers? Is that a sound wage policy for the whole Little Steel formula does.

Second, the formula should be scrapped because it is out of date. It is getting more and more antiquated. To say on the eve of 1945 that a wage policy based on January 1941 is an up-to-date and a proper method of regulating pay is to confuse the issue. To say that the formula is a sound basis to fill these jobs. Is that fair to the Mexicans and Bahamans? Is that fair to our workers? Is that a sound wage policy for the whole Little Steel formula does.

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What the formula did was this. The War Labor Board said: January 1941 is our anchorage. We should pay out the anchor chain 15 percent, because that's about how much the cost of living has gone up since January 1941. That's all. Forget the tide and don't pay out the anchor chain another inch. Well, the tide of the cost of living went right on rising. Pulled down by the drag of the lag of wage stabilization the ship of labor's wages was about ready to capsize. The farther the current carries us away from the anchorage the more imminent is the danger. Labor does not propose that we go off the anchorage. It merely asks that we change our anchorage to the realities of today and set our whole wage stabilization on an even keel.

Third, the Little Steel formula should go because it is unfair. It is unfair not only because it cheats workers out of the rise in the cost of living after May 1942. It is unfair also because it deprives of his just compensation the worker who gets no general wage increase at all. This is the case, above all, because it favors the high paid worker against the low paid worker. That is because it is a percentage formula. You are paid 40 cents an hour. Your extra 15 percent is 6 cents. You are paid only 6 cents an hour. Your extra 15 percent is 90 cents. The other fellow is paid $1.20 an hour. His cost of living adjustment is 18 cents an hour. But the intent of the formula is to enable the worker to meet the rise in living costs. And living costs hit the low paid worker and the high paid worker as hard—if anything they hit the low paid worker harder.

And let me say that when I speak here tonight as a representative of the American Federation of Labor favoring for the removal of the Little Steel formula, I am pleading not only on behalf of the organized workers, but the unorganized workers as well. For the latter, which are the majority, the formula is a device whose meager pay, frozen by the formula, has borne the brunt of rising prices. It is time we put an end to this gross inequity.

Fourth, the formula should be scrapped because it is crippling. Its continued application will become the main obstacle to the return to full employment in our transition to peace. As overtime hours are reduced and the weekly earnings are cut, and as workers are forced to shift from higher paying war jobs to low paid jobs in trade and services, the formula will make impossible adjustments in pay which would assure them the maintenance of income sufficient to support high employment and a high standard of living. For the sake of full employment after the war, let us scrap the Little Steel formula.